



Board of County Commissioners

970-328-8605

970-328-8629(f)

eagleadmin@eaglecounty.us

www.eaglecounty.us

Denver Foundation
55 Madison St, #800
Denver, CO 80206

RE: Colorado Health Access Fund

February 25, 2019

Dear Selection Committee:

We support the Colorado Health Access Fund application submitted by the Hope Center. Recently, Eagle County voters approved a small marijuana tax to help our rural community of 54,000 residents (and almost as many visitors during the winter ski season) build a mental health system. Our needs are extensive. Last year, the number of suicides in our county doubled, and in 2018 we are on track to continue that trend. Both law enforcement and the ambulance district report a major increase in the need for a crisis response and a lack of mental health providers to deal with this issue. This grant will help the Hope Center expand and better assist our local law enforcement agencies with crisis response and ultimately better support the community at large.

Mental health and substance abuse issues should be handled by trained professionals. Law enforcement officers are not equipped to deal with these issues on their own. Current options are not ideal as a person may be inappropriately transported to the emergency room when they are not in need of medical attention or held in a room at the Vail Police Department jail in order to sober up, even though they have not committed a crime.

This grant, coupled with our new tax dollars, will allow us to support the mental health needs of the most vulnerable who come into contact with law enforcement, either on the streets or in our jails.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jeanne McQueeney

Chair

Kathy Chandler-Henry

Commissioner

Matt Scherr

Commissioner